

Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Statement for State Authority Amendment
December 15, 2005

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

Once again, the Committee is considering special interest legislation that has never had a hearing or subcommittee markup. Once again, the Committee appears willing to jeopardize the interests of the American people to satisfy the special interests here in Washington, DC.

The potential impacts of this legislation have not been examined by the Committee. We are operating in the dark.

We are told that some 80 states laws will be preempted if this legislation is enacted. This is probably just the tip of the iceberg and the Committee has no idea what the total number of state laws may be.

And the legislation appears to be specifically intended to preempt a California state law that simply guarantees consumers are notified when they are sold a product that contains substances that cause cancer or birth defects.

My amendment simply takes the minimal step of ensuring that we don't inadvertently end up being responsible for exposing children to the risks of cancer or birth defects.

Specifically, my amendment states that this legislation shall not have any effect upon a State law, regulation, or proposition that requires a person, including a company, to provide information that will allow parents or guardians to understand, monitor, or limit a child's exposure to cancer-causing agents or reproductive or developmental toxins.

Too many children in our country face cancer today, and scientists know that often time cancer or developmental problems are caused by environmental exposures. We can't expect children to protect themselves from these risks. And we can't rely on the special interests to look out for anything other than their bottom line. But parents want to protect their children, and given the proper information many will.

At a minimum, Congress shouldn't be taking away the tools of parents to understand the risks their children face. The last thing we should be doing is putting our children at greater risk of cancer and birth defects without the knowledge of their parents.

I urge all members to support this commonsense amendment.